



Literacy Links

February 2010
Volume 6, Number 6

Monthly E-Newsletter of Maine Reading First

The April 2006 Literacy Links provided an introduction to teaching nonfiction. The next two editions will focus on reading and comprehending informational texts.

Spotlight on...

Reading Informational Texts: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

Our high tech, information filled world requires us to teach students how to navigate a huge quantity of print material, a great percentage of which is nonfiction/informational in nature, as well as often electronic in format. Teachers have the ever increasing challenge of helping students learn to be discriminating consumers, say nothing of teaching the basic reading skills needed to comprehend the realm of informational texts. To investigate teaching informational text, we will look at current research and discuss facets of reading informational text that support student understanding.

The Research

For the last decade teaching students to read informational text has climbed higher on the radar screen of educators. With the ever increasing integration of computer technology that provides much greater access to informational text, coupled with the abundance of nonfiction trade books available across content areas and research findings that 90% of what adults read is nonfiction or informational text (as reported in the L.A. Times), it is essential to teach students specific strategies for accessing and understanding informational text. Unfortunately, research has also shown that primary grade students spend little time reading or learning to read and write nonfiction (Duke, 2000, 2004; Moss 2004). In order to be literate consumers in the 21st century, it is paramount that all teachers, at every level, teach students how to read and understand informational texts.

How is reading informational text different from reading fiction or literature?

Kristo and Bamford (2004, p. 15) point out that proficient readers approach informational text differently than they do fictional text. When reading fiction, readers:

- Expect the text to be untrue;



“Well done
is better
than
well said”

--Benjamin Franklin

Upcoming Maine Reading First Events

The Maine Reading First Literacy Leaders' Network (LLN) is underway for the 2009-10 school year. To learn more about the LLN, visit:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/materials.html>

or contact:

Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov



Attention
Attention...

2nd Annual Literacy Connections Conference

March 12, 2010
**“Strengthening
Families and
Communities
through
Literacy”**

Sponsored by the
**Maine Family
Literacy Initiative
(MEFLI).**

More information
and registration
materials are
available through
[www.mainefamilyl
iteracy.com](http://www.mainefamilyliteracy.com)
or by contacting

Pamela Cote
pam_cote@sanford.org
by phone:
(207)490-9712 x 11

- Expect the text to contain story elements, like characters, settings, and plots;
- Rely on the first line of the text to lead them into the story;
- Expect to begin reading on the first page and continue through to the end;
- Expect to read from top to bottom of the page; and
- Judge the quality of the work by how it entertains and holds their attention.

With informational text, proficient readers:

- Expect information that is true and accurate;
- Can often choose to read only part of the text;
- Can start the text at the front, the back, or somewhere in between, depending on the type of text and their purpose for reading it;
- May need to reread parts;
- Expect visual elements (i.e. illustrations, photographs, diagrams, maps, graphs, etc.) that convey meaning;
- May be interrupted from reading by visual elements; and
- May not read from top to bottom of the page.

Recognizing these differences, it is critical for teachers to integrate these types of reading strategies into their instruction so that readers learn how to effectively navigate both fictional and informational text.

Why is it important that students know about informational text features?

In order to read and understand informational text, students need to know it is written differently than narrative stories and that it contains different text structures. The features of informational text support the reader in finding information more efficiently. When students know how to use the table of contents, indices, sidebars, headings, captions, bold words, charts, graphs, and other features, they are able to locate and learn the information more effectively. Scaffolded, direct instruction in the structural features of informational text is imperative, especially as students engage in inquiry. Students must know:

- What type of text to use for what topic/purpose?
- How the structure of the text supports the content?
- How to determine if the text is a valid and reliable resource? Who wrote it? Why and when it was written?
- How the style of writing impacts the message and/or content?

HOW? What reading strategies are useful for nonfiction text?

Al Gonzalez, a middle school teacher from Chimacum School District, CSD 49, Chimacum, WA provides this basic guidance that can apply to any level when teaching informational text at

http://educatoral.com/reading_strategies.html:



“Minds are
like
parachutes.
They only
function when
they are
open.”

--Anonymous

READING STRATEGIES FOR INFORMATIONAL TEXT

- Decide the **PURPOSE** for reading a particular text (such as research, writing a report, textbook assignment, personal interest, etc.).

Knowing the purpose will help the reader decide what information and ideas are the most important to remember and learn.

- Think about what you already **KNOW** about the topic.

This will get your brain activated, and ready to learn about a particular topic, by connecting previously learned information to new information.

- **PREVIEW** the text and its features (like pictures, graphs, bold font, heading, captions, etc.).

This will also help activate your brain and get it ready for learning. The previewing will allow your brain to prepare for specific types of information that you are about to read.

- **CHUNK** the text by breaking it into smaller sections, slowing down, and re-reading.

There are many facts and ideas that are presented in informational text. Trying to learn from such texts can be difficult or overwhelming at times. These strategies will help minimize the overload of information you are taking in at one time and will dramatically increase your understanding and comprehension.

- Other Strategies you can use to understand, organize and remember what you read:

Picture it (Visualization)

Make connections

Keep notes

Make predictions

Ask questions

Additional tools to support teaching features of nonfiction texts can be found in Kristo and Bamford (2004). **Nonfiction in Focus**. Scholastic. NY. ISBN-10: 0-439-36598-8.

“One concern teachers express is that students do not have the skills to read and comprehend content-based text. Therefore, content area teachers need to be skilled in content-based reading strategies.” (Billmeyer, 1996)

UPCOMING EVENTS



April 30, 2010
Friday

2010 **Nonfiction** **Institute**

Keynote Speaker:
Prof. Myra
Zarnowski and
featuring children's
authors: Penny
Coleman and Ann
Bausum.
Sponsored by
University of Maine,
Orono. For
information and
registration
materials contact
Amy Cates at
207/581-2438 or
Amy_Cates@umit.maine.edu

Online Instructional Resources...

➤ <http://scholastic.com>

At Scholastic's teacher site, five day lesson plans with accompanying materials for teaching nonfiction are available free. A sample can be viewed at: <http://content.scholastic.com/browse/unitplan.jsp?id=109>

➤ <http://learn.nefec.org>

LEARN is an online reading resource tool that was created through a grant from Just Read, Florida! to the North East Florida Educational Consortium (NEFEC). Participants at this site are required to register and login, but it is more than worth the effort. LEARN provides a wealth of materials and guidance for teaching content literacy in addition to other literacy resources.

➤ www.slideshare.net

Slideshare is a free online resource where professionals can share powerpoint presentations and connect for collaboration on a variety of topics. The specific link below is from the Education strand and brings you to Angela Maiers' presentation on "Teaching Nonfiction Reading Strategies": www.slideshare.net/angelamaiers/teaching-nonfiction-reading-strategies-presentation. Participant are required to join Slideshare in order to view and use these materials.

Instructional Idea...

Book Look

Teaching Expository Text Structure

This lesson, found at www.fcrr.org, introduces students to the structure of expository text.

Objective: The students will identify parts of an expository text

Materials: Expository books, Student sheet (activity master C.011.SS), pencil

Activity: Students can be paired to identify parts of a book by completing the activity sheet.

1. Provide students with a variety of expository books, and a student sheet.
2. The students read the questions on the activity sheet.
3. They locate information in a self-selected nonfiction book and record on the student activity sheet.



“What children know (and don’t know) about the world around them—about people, places and things—has an enormous impact on literacy.”

—Wilson & Anderson, 1996



Name _____

Book Look

C.O.I.L.S.S.

Title and Author		
Book Parts	Found in book? Yes or No	If yes, search and find.
Diagram		Describe a diagram and record the page number.
Chapter		How many chapters are in the book? What is one of the titles?
Index		Where is the index located in the book?
Index		Locate and record a topic in the index and the page number.
Glossary		Write a word found in the glossary. Write the guide words found on the page of the word.
Table of Contents		Where is the table of contents located in the book?
Table of Contents		Use the table of contents to record a chapter title, its number, and beginning page.
Picture with caption		Write the caption and the page number.

2006 The Florida Center for Reading Research (Revised July, 2007)

2-3 Student Center Activities: Comprehension

Summary of Professional Texts...

Nonfiction in Focus

by Janice V. Kristo and Rosemary A. Bamford

To help simplify the overwhelming process of teaching children to read nonfiction, Bamford and Kristo (2000) outlined nonfiction texts into categories/text types. In *Checking Out Nonfiction K-8* (2000), they provided teachers with explicit descriptors of each type of nonfiction and the purpose of each (pp. 9-39):

- Concept Books
- Identification/Field Guides
- Photographic Essay

Save the Date

August 10-12, 2010

**Summer Literacy
Institute:**

*Responsive
Literacy
Instruction for
All Learners*

Sponsored by
Maine DOE Reading
First. Registration
information will be
coming in the March
2010 edition of
Literacy Links.
Contact: [Leeann.Lar
sen@maine.gov](mailto:Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov)

**Institute for
Designing and Planning
a Whole-School
Comprehensive
Literacy Intervention
Model, K-6**

Guest Presenters:
Dr. Linda J. Dorn
and Dr. Barbara
Schubert.

Sponsored by
University of Maine,
Orono. For
information and
registration
materials contact
Amy Cates at
207/581-2438 or
[Amy_Cates@umit.m
aine.edu](mailto:Amy_Cates@umit.maine.edu)

- Life-Cycle
- Experiment, Activity, Craft, and How-To-Do Books
- Documents, Journals, Diaries, and Albums
- Survey Books
- Specialized Texts
- Reference, and
- Informational Picture Storybooks
- Life Stories (Biographies-Autobiographies)

In their sequel text, Nonfiction in Focus, Bamford and Kristo go deeper into the nonfiction text types and the features found in the variety of nonfiction texts. Explicit examples of how teachers teach students to read and write nonfiction for multiples purposes across all content areas are provided.

Nonfiction in Focus: A Comprehensive Framework for Helping Students Become Independent Readers and Writers of Nonfiction, K-6 (2004) by Kristo and Bamford is published by Scholastic and the ISBN-10 is 0-439-36598-8.

Reading Strategy Lessons for Science & Social Studies: 15 Research-Based Strategy Lessons That Help Students Read and Learn From Content-Area Texts

By Laura Robb

Mentor teacher and reading expert, Laura Robb, shares 12 practical, research-based lessons that teachers can use to help kids navigate the special demands of the text they encounter in science and social studies classes. Strategy lessons include building background knowledge, asking questions, visualizing, building vocabulary, synthesizing information, and much more. The text includes management tips and student samples, and is best suited for use with grades 5 & up.

Reading Strategy Lessons for Science & Social Studies (2009) by Laura Robb is published by Scholastic Teaching Resources and the ISBN-13 is 978-0439926423.

Children's Literature...

The 2010 Caldecott Award Winner

The Lion and the Mouse

By Jerry Pinkney

Award-winning artist Jerry Pinkney's wordless adaptation of one of Aesop's most beloved fables depicts an unlikely pair learning that no act of kindness is ever wasted. After a ferocious lion spares a cowering mouse that he'd planned to eat, the mouse later comes to his rescue, freeing him from a poacher's trap. With vivid depictions of the landscape of the African Serengeti and expressively-drawn characters, Pinkney makes this a truly special retelling, and

his stunning pictures speak volumes (Amazon.com. 2010).

Appropriate for readers ages 4-8. **The Lion and the Mouse**, (2009). By Jerry Pinkney is available from Little, Brown Books for Young Readers and the ISBN-13 is 978-0316013567.

Home Connections...

Strengthening Your Family Literacy Program Through Family Outreach

Guy E. Rowe School, Norway, Maine

Submitted with permission of Reed Dyer and Jane Morse



This resource is in the form of a power point presentation delivered at the 2007 Reading First Institute held in Bethel, Maine. In it they explain how they increase community attendance and parental support in their Family Literacy Program. A variety of techniques for including student literacy performances at these events are offered. For more information and resources contact: Reed_dyer@sad17.k12.me.us or Jane_morse@sad17.k12.me.us

SNEAK PREVIEW

Still to come

IN 2010 Literacy Links—

- ❖ Oral Language
- ❖ Intervention
for Vocabulary &
Comprehension

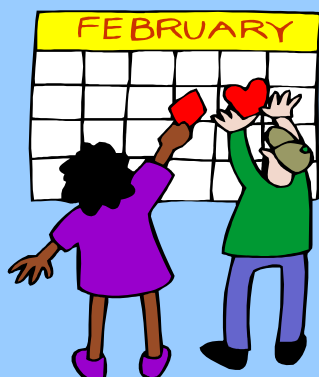
News from Maine Reading First...

MDOE Summer Literacy Institute 2010

Responsive Literacy Instruction for All Learners

The Maine Department of Education's Summer Literacy Institute will be held on August 10-12, 2010. The Institute will be open to school teams committed to developing an action plan for a data-based literacy need identified in their school. Team members will have time to work collaboratively on their action plans, while also attending keynote and breakout sessions focused on a variety of literacy related content connected to the institute theme: *Responsive Literacy Instruction for All Learners*. Institute sessions will encompass a range of literacy topics, including vocabulary and comprehension instruction, the use of assessment to guide instruction, constructed response to reading, collaborative data meetings, literacy leadership, coaching, and classroom (tier one) interventions. School teams should be composed of at least one administrator, classroom teachers, literacy coaches, and literacy interventionists. MDOE consultants will provide ongoing support to school teams as they develop their action plans during the institute.

We still want your suggestions! As you peruse the monthly editions of *Literacy Links*, you might have topic ideas for the spotlight, instructional strategy, children's literature, professional text, or web site resource sections. We'd love to hear your suggestions. Please email them to: geecon@fairpoint.net.



Check it out...


www.readwritethink.org

Read-Write-Think has added a whole section for parents, and a number of new resources for educators. The parent section even has pod casts called “Chatting about Books” for parents to download. Interesting!

Newsletter Archives

Earlier editions of *Literacy Links* available on the Maine Reading First website at <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

Edition	Spotlight Topic
March, 2005	Maine Reading First
April, 2005	Maine Reading First Course
May, 2005	Reading Fluency
June, 2005	Vocabulary
September, 2005	Phonemic Awareness
October, 2005	Phonics
November, 2005	Comprehension
December, 2005/January, 2006	DIBELS
February, 2006	Literacy Centers
March, 2006	Interactive Read Aloud
April, 2006	Nonfiction
May, 2006	Word Walls
June, 2006	Classroom Design
September, 2006	Shared Reading
October, 2006	Automaticity
November, 2006	Using Assessment to Guide Instruction
December, 2006	Deepening Comprehension
January, 2007	Selecting Quality Children's Books (part 1)
February, 2007	Selecting Quality Children's Books (part 2)
March, 2007	Making Instruction Explicit
April, 2007	Motivation and Engagement
May-June 2007	Grouping for Instruction
September 2007	Making Instruction Systematic
October, 2007	Pacing Instruction
November, 2007	Managed Independent Practice
December, 2007	A Deeper Look at Phonemic Awareness
January, 2008	Phonics at the K-2 Grade Span
February, 2008	Phonics and Word Work Grades 3-5
March, 2008	Vocabulary Revisited

	April, 2008	A Deeper Look at Vocabulary Instruction
	May-June 2008	Fluency Revisited
	August 2008	Fluency Assessment
	September-October 2008	The Revised Maine <i>Learning Results</i> English Language Arts Standards
	November 2008	Comprehending Comprehension
	December 2008	Comprehension Strategies
	January 2009	Response to Intervention (RTI)
	February 2009	Multiple Tiers of Intervention
	March 2009	Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring for RTI
	April 2009	Collaborative Problem-Solving for RTI
	May-June 2009	Purposeful Text Selection
	August 2009	Vocabulary Development
	September 2009	Vocabulary Instruction
	October 2009	Morphology
	November-December 2009	Instructional Routines
	January 2010	Partnering with Parents and Caregivers
	<p>For additional information about any of the items in this newsletter or to sign up to receive this e-newsletter, please email Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov</p> <p>Click here to view the Maine Reading First website http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm</p> <p>The professional development opportunities and materials are listed in <i>Literacy Links</i> for informational purposes only and are not necessarily endorsed by the Maine Department of Education's Maine Reading First Initiative.</p>	